

MassHealth Nursing Facility Investment to Support Dedicated COVID-19 Isolation Spaces

Updated as of April 13, 2020

Overview and Objectives of Dedicated COVID-19 Isolation Spaces

- Massachusetts is acting to build capacity for COVID-19 positive hospital discharge patients and individuals in the community who need nursing facility level of care, adding to the 500+ beds of capacity that will be created as part of the Dedicated COVID-19 Nursing Facility efforts
- This initiative builds upon Department of Public Health (DPH) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) guidance and regulations that aim to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 within a long-term care facility by cohorting residents
- With this investment, facilities are expected to implement best practices for infection control and maintain sufficient staffing levels to properly care for the two resident cohorts within the facility

To qualify for funding, nursing facilities must meet the following criteria:

- A facility should identify and establish separate space within the facility in which it can isolate and care for COVID-19 positive residents (“isolation space”)
- Isolation space can be an isolated wing, unit or floor
 - An isolation space must create “meaningful separation” between the space in which the facility isolates the COVID-19 positive residents and the space in which the facility provides care to those who are COVID-19 negative or asymptomatic
 - An example of meaningful separation includes separation that does not require facility personnel providing services to the residents in the COVID-19 isolation unit or wing to go through space in which the negative or asymptomatic residents are receiving care
 - A curtain or a moveable screen does not provide meaningful separation between units or wings
- The facility must be in compliance with state and federal regulatory requirements for infection control practices in nursing homes, and update its practices based upon the most current DPH, CDC and CMS infection control and COVID-19 guidance. The facility must ensure that it can meet the following minimum requirements within the isolation space:
 - Policies and procedures for maintaining strict infection control practices and testing protocols;
 - Policies and procedures to ensure no comingling of COVID-19 positive residents with other residents outside of the isolation space; and
 - Completely separate staffing teams to care for the COVID-19 positive residents
 - Ensure that the heating, air conditioning and ventilation system is fully serviced and functional, and that reasonable efforts are taken to create a negative pressure space or maximize air exchange
- The Provider may not deny admission to a person because they are COVID-19 positive, regardless of whether the individual is entering from a hospital, the community, or

another setting, unless the Provider does not have bed capacity or staffing capacity, or is otherwise clinically unable to provide appropriate services to such person

- The Provider must be responsive to hospital requests for discharge planning and available to accept new admissions, as appropriate given their staffing and clinical care capacity, from 7:00am to 7:00pm seven days a week
- The provider must report daily on the number of unoccupied, available beds in the isolation space
 - EOHHS will maintain a public listing of the nursing facilities with COVID-19 isolation space as well as the number of unoccupied beds to facilitate hospital discharge planning
- **The facility must provide an attestation to MassHealth that they are in compliance and meet all of the aforementioned criteria**

Financing structure

- \$30 per MassHealth member per day in nursing facilities that maintain Dedicated COVID-19 isolation space
 - The supplemental payment applies to all MassHealth members in the facility, i.e., both COVID-19 positive residents in the isolation space as well as negative or asymptomatic residents
 - Represents a 15% rate increase for qualifying facilities, this is in addition to the 10% increase facilities will receive through the \$50M financial relief package announced in early April
 - In total, qualifying facilities will be eligible for a total rate increase of 25%
- Monthly lump sum payments for the duration of the state of emergency
- Payments are effective on the date that MassHealth receives the facility's attestation of compliance
- Payments are subject to DPH inspections and EOHHS audit of compliance with criteria stated above